

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

- 1           1.       A method for improving the intelligibility of speech output by a speech  
2 synthesizer, comprising the steps of:  
3           determining if uncommon words exist in the text; and  
4           if it is determined that an uncommon word exists in the text, pausing the output of  
5 the synthesized speech of the uncommon word to offset the uncommon word from its  
6 surrounding speech.
- 1           2.       The method of Claim 1, wherein the determination is made by comparing  
2 the input text to common words stored in a database and determining if a word is  
3 uncommon if the word is not in the database.
- 1           3.       The method of Claim 1, wherein a word is determined as uncommon if the  
2 word is capitalized.
- 1           4.       The method of Claim 1, wherein the determination is made by using a  
2 statistical language model.
- 1           5.       The method of Claim 4, wherein the statistical language model compares a  
2 calculated value with a threshold value and if the calculated value is less than the  
3 threshold value the word is determined as uncommon.
- 1           6.       The method of Claim 1, wherein the determination is made by using a  
2 prediction algorithm.
- 1           7.       The method of Claim 6, wherein the prediction algorithm compares a  
2 calculated value with a threshold value and if the calculated value is less than the  
3 threshold value the word is determined as uncommon.

1           8.       The method of Claim 1, wherein the pausing is inserted at least one of  
2 before, after and within the uncommon word.

1           9.       A system for improving the intelligibility of speech output by a speech  
2 synthesizer, comprising:  
3           a rare sequence detector to determining if uncommon words exist in the text, and  
4 if it is determined that an uncommon word exists in the text, pausing the output of the  
5 synthesized speech of the uncommon word to offset the uncommon word from its  
6 surrounding speech.

1           10.      The system of Claim 9, wherein the rare sequence detector determines an  
2 that a word is an uncommon word by comparing the input text to common words stored  
3 in a database and determining if a word is uncommon if the word is not in the database.

1           11.      The system of Claim 9, wherein the rare sequence detector determines that  
2 a word is an uncommon word if the word is capitalized.

1           12.      The system of Claim 9, wherein the rare sequence detector determines that  
2 a word is an uncommon word by using a statistical language model.

1           13.      The system of Claim 12, wherein the statistical language model compares  
2 a calculated value with a threshold value and if the calculated value is less than the  
3 threshold value the word is determined as uncommon.

1           14.      The system of Claim 9, wherein the rare sequence detector determines that  
2 a word is an uncommon word by using a prediction algorithm.

1           15.     The system of Claim 14, wherein the prediction algorithm compares a  
2     calculated value with a threshold value and if the calculated value is less than the  
3     threshold value the word is determined as uncommon.

1           16.     The system of Claim 9, wherein the pausing is inserted at least one of  
2     before, after and within the uncommon word.

1           18.     A computer program device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a  
2     program of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for  
3     determining if uncommon words exist in the text, and if it is determined that an  
4     uncommon word exists in the text, pausing the output of the synthesized speech of the  
5     uncommon word to offset the uncommon word from its surrounding speech.

1           19.     The computer program device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying  
2     a program of instructions executable by the machine of Claim 18, wherein a word is  
3     determined as uncommon if the word is capitalized.

1           20.     The computer program device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying  
2     a program of instructions executable by the machine of Claim 18, wherein the  
3     determination is made by using a statistical language model.

1           21.     The computer program device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying  
2     a program of instructions executable by the machine of Claim 20, wherein the statistical  
3     language model compares a calculated value with a threshold value and if the calculated  
4     value is less than the threshold value the word is determined as uncommon.

1           22.     The computer program device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying  
2     a program of instructions executable by the machine of Claim 18, wherein the  
3     determination is made by using a prediction algorithm.

1           23.     The computer program device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying  
2     a program of instructions executable by the machine of Claim 22, wherein the prediction  
3     algorithm compares a calculated value with a threshold value and if the calculated value  
4     is less than the threshold value the word is determined as uncommon.

1           24.     The computer program device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying  
2     a program of instructions executable by the machine of Claim 18, wherein the pausing is  
3     inserted at least one of before, after and within the uncommon word.